

basis are more likely to receive important screening services, such as pelvic exams, as well as counseling on critical reproductive health issues. My legislation removes the barriers complicating women's access to their doctors. Women will no longer have to contend with the gatekeeper system that can prevent or delay appropriate care.

It is easy to understand what a difference direct OB-GYN access makes in women's health care. Imagine, for a moment, a woman in San Diego who works 45 hours a week and has limited sick and vacation time. Now, imagine she has an urgent medical problem requiring an OB-GYN visit. On Monday, she calls from work to make an appointment with her primary care physician. If she is lucky, she gets an appointment for the following morning. She takes time off Tuesday to go see her doctor. Her primary care doctor agrees she should be seen by her OB-GYN and gives her a referral. Tuesday afternoon, she returns to work and calls her OB-GYN for an appointment. The doctor is in surgery on Wednesday, but they offer her an appointment on Friday morning. On Friday she takes another morning off from work, and finally, after almost a week, gets the care she needs. The unnecessary referral process resulted in her taking an extra morning off work and delayed her proper medical care by five days. The patient, employer, primary care physician, and health plan provider would have saved money and time if the patient had been able to go directly to her OB-GYN.

The public overwhelmingly supports direct access to OB-GYN care. A survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University found that 82 percent support direct access legislation and 63 percent would support it even if their health insurance costs increased.

While serving in the California State Assembly, I heard from many women who experienced the same problems I have outlined today. After meeting with women, obstetricians and gynecologists, health plan representatives, and providers in the State of California, I wrote the State law allowing women direct access to their OB-GYN. That law was a good first step; however, it still does not cover women enrolled in self-insured, federally regulated health plans. This means that even if a woman lives in a State with direct access protections, like California, she may not be able to see her OB-GYN without a referral if she is covered by a federally regulated ERISA health plan. In addition, there are almost a dozen states which still do not provide women with direct access to OB-GYNs.

Women save time and money with better access to OB-GYN care. I believe the time has come to make direct access to an OB-GYN a national standard.

I urge you, Madam Speaker, and all of my colleagues to pass this critical legislation into law.

3,000 REASONS TO WITHDRAW TROOPS

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, New Year's Eve marked another grave milestone in

Iraq, as the United States lost its 3,000th soldier since the war began. Attacks on our troops are increasing as civil war spreads. America lost more troops in Iraq in December than in any other month during the previous two years.

As we honor the fallen, we must remember the daily life and death consequences of President Bush's policies. The time to begin withdrawing our troops from Iraq has long since passed. The longer we have stayed the course, the worse conditions in Iraq have become.

November's elections were a mandate for change in Iraq. As more and more members of the President's own party deem the Administration's policy a failure, an overwhelming majority of Americans are calling on President Bush to draw down our troops from Iraq. It has become resoundingly clear that a military solution is not possible. Our troops were not trained for or sent to Iraq to referee a civil war. An extended American military presence will just continue to fuel the insurgency.

The Republican co-chair of the Iraq Study Group, James Baker, warned that "We no longer can afford to stay the course," and Lee Hamilton, the Democratic co-chair, agreed. "The current approach is not working and the ability of the United States to influence events is diminishing. Our ship of state has hit rough waters. It must now chart a new way forward." Instead of continuing to stubbornly defend his administration's failed war strategies, the President must now work with Congress and foreign leaders to chart a diplomatic strategy that reduces the violence in Iraq.

The President left the U.S. with no good options, but increasing the number of American servicemen and women in Iraq is an unacceptable course. The new Congress must use its authority to ensure that the calls of the American people do not fall on deaf ears.

It will take many years for the U.S. to move beyond the setbacks we have suffered in Iraq. Our military is overstretched. Our diplomatic authority has been severely diminished. We have shifted our focus away from Afghanistan, and a resurgent Taliban is increasing its attacks on American troops.

For those families whose sons and daughters died in the war, the wounds will never heal. Illinois is one of eight states that lost more than 100 troops in Iraq. From Rock Island to Champaign, from Skokie to Carbondale, more than 100 families have suffered the ultimate loss. It is time to change course.

RECOGNIZING KENNETH G. SAMPSELL FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Kenneth G. Sampsell, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 351, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Kenneth has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the

many years Kenneth has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Kenneth G. Sampsell for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Kenneth in the United States House of Representatives.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES BEACH, III

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an exceptional Kentuckian, Mayor Charles "Charlie" Beach III. After serving 32 years as mayor of the City of Beattyville, Kentucky, Mayor Beach is leaving office. I want to express my deepest gratitude for his many contributions and years of public service.

Throughout his tenure, Mayor Beach has led a number of initiatives to improve the lives of Lee County residents, build hope in our Appalachian region, and serve as an economic and community development leader for the entire Commonwealth. Southern and Eastern Kentucky has been plagued with inadequate water and sewer infrastructure and poor housing opportunities. Mayor Beach has been the driving force behind construction of two water plants, a sewage treatment plant, and installation of necessary piping to serve and reach the rural residents of Beattyville and Lee County. In addition, Mayor Beach is well-regarded throughout the Commonwealth for his vision of providing quality, affordable housing.

Since 2002, Mayor Beach has been a critical partner in our regional anti-drug initiative "Operation UNITE." Beach was a key early supporter and critical ally in getting drugs off our streets and cleaning up our communities. He has consistently backed efforts to educate our children on the dangers of drug use and our program to help drug users find treatment options.

In addition to his duties as mayor, Charles Beach is also the Vice-Chairman of the Peoples Exchange Bank where he provides business development and public relations leadership. He is the former President of the Kentucky League of Cities and has served as the Chairman of the Kentucky River Area Development District. These organizations promote the welfare and economic growth of Kentucky's rural and urban areas.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank Mayor Beach for his selfless sacrifice and service on behalf of the people of the City of Beattyville, Lee County, and the Commonwealth of Kentucky. His dedication and integrity are an inspiration to us all and I know his contributions will live on for many years to come.